

## **ANNUAL EQUALITY STATEMENT Year end 31 March 2016**

The Committee's Equality Scheme states that the Committee will report on the progress it has made in the delivery of its Section 75 statutory duties.

### **Our Commitment**

The Committee re-affirms its commitment to the fulfilment of its duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in that it will have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and,
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, NILGOSC shall, in carrying out its functions, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

### **Promotion of Equality of Opportunity**

NILGOSC has demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity during 2015/16 and the equality agenda continues to be promoted and supported by the most senior levels of the organisation.

The NILGOSC Corporate Plan for 2015/16 included objectives relating to equality and community relations. The Senior Management Team has monitored the implementation of these objectives on a quarterly basis.

### **Implementation of the Equality Scheme**

NILGOSC's Equality Scheme was last approved by the Equality Commission on 25 July 2012. NILGOSC carried out its duties in relation to the Equality Scheme throughout 2015/16 to ensure that its policies and procedures are fair and lawful. NILGOSC undertook an Audit of Inequalities between November 2014 and March 2015 to identify any inequalities that exist for those affected by the functions and policies of the pension scheme. The results were used to inform NILGOSC's Equality Scheme Action Plan for 2015 to 2018 which, following consultation, was submitted to the Equality Commission in September 2015. A number of the actions set out in the Action Plan for 2015 to 2018 were progressed during the 2015/16 financial year. Some of the actions that have been taken or that are in progress include:

- On 1 October 2015, NILGOSC enrolled all staff onto an e-learning course "Equality and Diversity in the Northern Ireland Workplace". The course is CPD accredited and has been specifically designed for the Northern Ireland workplace. The course has been completed by all staff and any new staff are enrolled onto the course as part of the induction process. External training was also provided at the Staff Conference on 26 February 2016 to

all staff on practical customer care when dealing with members with different disabilities or communication barriers.

- NILGOSC's policies have been updated to reflect the Shared Parental Leave arrangements applicable from 5 April 2015.
- Job descriptions are being updated on an ongoing basis to include a paragraph regarding equality duties that form part of responsibilities of the post.
- NILGOSC improved the markings and signage in respect of the disabled parking space available in the Templeton House car park.
- Following on from the data gathered as part of the Audit of Inequalities, recruitment advertising continues to target underrepresented groups by welcoming applications from males, people with disabilities and Roman Catholics.
- An Alternative Communications leaflet is included with all retirement claim forms issued. The leaflet includes headline information in alternative formats and languages. As at 31 March 2016, there are 53 individuals to whom NILGOSC sends information in an alternative format.
- NILGOSC has continued to record the key reasons for members leaving the Scheme to try and identify any patterns which may indicate potential inequalities.
- A review of the potential inequalities inherent in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 was completed and the Department of the Environment was advised in August 2015 of one item that it may wish to consider.
- A staff survey regarding Equality and Good Relations was issued during the 2015/16 financial year. The results of the survey will be used to help identify any actions that could promote improved good relations among staff.

In line with its Equality Scheme, NILGOSC carried out screening of any new or revised policies for equality impacts during 2015/16 and published quarterly screening reports on the website.

NILGOSC did not receive any complaints relating to equality issues in the 2015/16 year and continues to provide its publications in alternative formats on request.

Those who require further information about the NILGOSC Equality Scheme or would prefer to receive this document in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the Equality Officer at:

Address: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP  
Telephone: 0845 308 7345  
Typetalk: 18001 0845 308 7345 (for people using a textphone)  
Fax: 0845 308 7344  
Email: [info@nilgosc.org.uk](mailto:info@nilgosc.org.uk)

Copies of the Equality Scheme and this Annual Equality Statement are also available on the Internet at [www.nilgosc.org.uk/equality-scheme](http://www.nilgosc.org.uk/equality-scheme).